

The Oregon Psychological Association (OPA) urges our Legislators to take a strong stand against SB 418-2. At a time when Federal agencies are calling for improvements to Oregon's mental health system, this bill will significantly weaken licensure standards for Oregon psychologists (United States Department of Justice Interim Report to the State of Oregon, January 2, 2014). The bill is being promoted by a for-profit organization with no ties to Oregon that makes its money by selling "education" that lacks the core components of an effective graduate training program, including regular supervised practice. Passage of this bill would be a significant step backward in the protection of Oregon consumers of mental health services.

Why does **program accreditation** of healthcare training programs matter to citizens of Oregon?

Protection for citizens:

- Approving applicants from non-accredited programs removes the expectation for training quality required by national accreditation standards of the profession.
- Accreditation assures the public that they are receiving care from qualified healthcare providers whose education has met the highest standards in their profession.

Protection for graduate students who may incur significant debt:

- Non-accredited programs place students at significant risk in completing their training. Beginning in 2017, only students from accredited programs are permitted to enter the national match, which matches internships to students for the required 5th year of training.
- Accreditation assures students who are investing thousands of dollars in their education they will receive comprehensive training preparing them to be competent, licensed healthcare providers.

What are the differences between program vs. regional accreditation?

Program Accreditation

- Analyzes the specific professional training *program*.
 - Medical, Dental, Psychology, Physical Therapy, Optometry, Chiropractic rely on program accreditation to establish and maintain training standards.
 - Graduation from an *accredited program* (not just an accredited *institution*) is a *requirement* for licensure for most healthcare professions.
- Similar to program accreditation in other healthcare professions, the American Psychological Association verifies the quality of academic and clinical training.
 - Assesses profession-specific outcomes through each stage of training.
 - Establishes and maintains standards for competency, internship placement and licensure.

Regional Accreditation

- Analyzes the educational *institution*.
 - Financial stability of the organization.
 - Facilities and maintenance of physical plant.
 - Number and educational qualifications of faculty, faculty to student ratio.
 - Administrative policies and procedures for professional and classified staff.
 - Student loan, student financial aid processes, adherence to US Dept of Education guidelines.
- Regional or institutional accreditation is an essential *first* step and is required by the Dept of Education for a student to receive federal financial aid dollars.

At a time when our state is looking to improve mental health care, we should be striving to elevate licensure standards—and the quality of care we provide.

Vote NO on HB 4002